(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Government of Karnataka submitted a proposal for diversion of 188.40 ha. forest land in favour of Revenue Department for rehabilitation of 154 tribal families displaced by formation of Bandipur National Park and construction of Kabini Reservoir in District Mysore, Karnataka. The proposal was rejected on 21.03.2001 due to the reasons that the intent of non-forestry use in the National Park/wildlife sanctuary is not in consonance with the provisions of section-29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the orders of the Supreme Court banning removal of dead, diseased, dying or wind-fallen trees, drift wood and grasses, etc. from any National Park or Game Sanctuary.

Atrocities by Forest Officials on tribal women

†2544. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise details, including Chhattisgarh/MP, regarding atrocities and violence being committed by the Department of Forests officials against the tribal women, in the name of forest security, during last one year;

(b) whether there is any plan to evict the inhabitants of forests from the forest areas; if so, whether the inhabitants of the forests being evicted are being provided with the land and other means of livelihood; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) There is no specific report with the Government of India that atrocities and violence are being committed by the Officials of Forest Department against the tribal women, in the name of forest security, during the last one year. However, the Government is aware about a newspaper report of tribals' molestation in Chhattisgarh, published in the Hindustan Times dated 24.02.2002. The Central Government immediately took up the matter with the Chhattisgarh Government and requested for immediate enquiry and report.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

As per the report submitted by the Chhattisgarh Government, an attempt of encroachment under Raipur Forest Circle in Pithoda Police station was foiled by the Forest and Police officials on 12.08.1995 and again on 28.01.1998. The forest land was lying barren and the local forest protection committee had passed resolution in November, 2001 for getting the area planted up. Forest Department started works preparatory to plantations from 08.01.2002. The encroachers tried to put obstacles in this work by sending their women folk and prevent the forest officials from carrying out afforestation work.

These encroachers were evicted on 18.02.2002 with the help of Revenue and Police officials including women constables. Forest Protection committee members were also present there. The encroachers including 13 women belonging to tribal & backward communities where arrested and released on bail the same day. The National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and National Commission for Women have taken notice of this and District Magistrate, Raipur has also ordered and magisterial enquiry.

(b) and (c) There is no plan to evict the bonafide inhabitants of forests from the forest areas. In case of protected areas where relocation of habitations situated inside National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries is undertaken in the interest of conservation of wildlife and its habitat and for the safety of human life and property, suitable arrangements for alternate land and other facilities are made for the purpose.

A decision has also been taken that all encroachments which are not eligible for regularisation as per guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment & Forests should be summarily evicted in a time bound manner. Since encroachment on forest land is an offence, they are not entitled for any relocation package.

Area under BT. Cotton cultivation

2545. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Bangalore edition of "Deccan Herald" dated 8th June, 2002 under the caption, "BT. Cotton may lose resistance to Bollworm in long run";